

A D D R E S S

ON OCCASION OF THE ADDRESS BY DEPUTY COMMISSIONERS, BURGER, PRUIS AND DR CHRIS DE KOCK AT A MEETING ARRANGED AS A CONSEQUENCE OF A MEETING WITH COMMISSIONER FIVAZ HELD AT THE GREEK SPORTING CLUB ON TUESDAY, 18 FEBRUARY 1997

Briefly, as you all know, the Federation only gets involved with matters that are of National interest, be they on the local front affecting Hellenes, or Internationally where Hellenes are affected either overseas, locally and/or the inter-relationship due to International relations.

Crime in South Africa is a National problem and hence the involvement of the Federation at National level with the National Commissioner of Police, Commissioner Fivaz and his colleagues.

At his instance, he is desirous of a National Forum with Hellenism represented by the Federation being developed and moreover, he invited that Deputy Commissioner Pruis, Burger and Dr Chris de Kock address an Hellenic audience this evening.

At the outset allow me to make apologies for Deputy Commissioner Pruis, but without any doubt we have a top man in the Planning and Strategic Division in Deputy Commissioner Burger and naturally Dr Chris de Kock

we have heard and read much about in the Press, particularly of late.

A hearty welcome to you, Deputy Commissioner Burger and Dr De Kock, as well as to our audience.

Before proceeding with the purpose of the meeting this evening, allow me to emphasise that although we as Hellenes are concerned, it is to be stressed that it is a National problem and not only Hellenic and therefore every facet of the South African population and Law abiding citizens are affected.

We realise that Hellenism feels hurt because they seem to be the majority in Industries that are soft targets namely, Supermarkets and Fast Food Industries. Only yesterday did we have the unfortunate incident of an innocent pregnant lady being killed working for her living and not stealing her food. We all have to assist to put an end to this.

And at this point in time, I wish to emphasise that Hellenism, although a small minority group in the Republic of South Africa, approximately 100,000, on its own accord is however one of the biggest providers of employment opportunities.

It is a known fact that many have left, but I assure you the majority wish to remain, the majority of Hellenes wish to see stability re-introduced in their lives, so that they may continue with reinvestment in the Republic of South Africa and not seek greener pastures elsewhere.

In so doing, they will continue to become greater job providers which undoubtedly is one of the greatest scourges in South Africa's socio-economic life.

We must realise that it is not only the "pawn", namely the gangster in the criminal Industry that is creating this problem. The gangster that comes with his arms and ammunition. It is also these well organised syndicates that are the backbone to giving and making life worthwhile for these "pawns", namely those who handle stolen goods, be it a stolen motorcar, a stolen implement, machine, hardware, groceries, jewellery, all forms of commodities. We see from time to time when the Police successfully raid such syndicates exactly what goods are found.

The disease is therefore widespread and it is not only protection to the various human beings that will cure the Industry, but we have to eradicate the root of all this evil. However, I must leave this to the experts.

I wish to quote what General Fivaz passed on to Hellenism on the eve of 29 November 1996, which is only two months ago and I quote as follows :

"In general, what I can say as the National Commissioner, is that we should not lose hope, we have so many positive things coming out of our environment nowadays, that we are really in a position to say that, for the very first time, we are beginning to win the war against crime. We cannot say that we have won, but we are winning - we are in the process of making progress and we are very positive about the fact that very soon we will be in an even more advantageous position as far as crime fighting is concerned in South Africa.

What should be done from the Communities out there and more especially the Hellenic Congregations and Communities, is really to form partnerships with the Police Service - not only at National level, but lower down the structure - we have to cascade down a system of partnerships, right down to Station level and we have to set up capacity and arrangements in those partnerships, to deal more effectively with grassroots level crime.

I know that many shopkeepers, many business people are of the opinion that the Police Service has to do more about crime fighting and the protection of people. I know that this type of perception is running all over South Africa and that we still have a high level of uncertainty and people are not feeling very safe in their environments. We have to turn that around, but we have to take joint responsibility for that. We have to form co-operative partnerships with the Police Service and we have to deal with those problem spots and problem areas and I have no doubt in my mind, that the right mechanism to be utilised for this purpose, is the Police plan. In the Police plan, we have a very special arrangement around sector policing and in this sector, we can have all types of partnerships with the Communities, to deal with specific crimes in those areas and we can even set up monitoring mechanisms to monitor whether we are making progress or what.

So my message to the Hellenic Community is really - let us not lose hope, let us take up this responsibility because it is really a mutual responsibility in our Society's crime fighting. Let us take it up and let us move forward with it. Let us make progress and let us create a situation of winning the streets back from the criminals, because that is the only way to deal with crime in South Africa".

It is here that I want to emphasise that the Federation of Hellenic Communities will definitely make it our mutual responsibility in assisting society's plight against crime. We do want to create the situation of winning the streets back from the criminals.

We now look forward to the address by our two guest speakers. **THERE WILL BE QUESTION TIME.** And from there we will decide "whither we goest".

Thank you.

18 February 1997
FED/3497/rg